

## **Support Japan, prepare yourself**

By Councilmember Rose Herrera

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Our hearts go out to the residents of Japan during this unimaginable tragedy. The crisis continues to worsen due to the crippled nuclear plants. Many of us feel helpless with the magnitude of the devastation. There are ways to help the victims of this tragedy and prepare for an emergency in our community.

The nation of Japan will need our support for many months and years to come. The devastation that we saw in Haiti has taught us that we must come together as a global community to support each other for the long-term.

Like many veterans, I have a special connection to Japan. I was stationed in Okinawa and I have a tremendous love and respect for the people and culture of Japan. With great pride, I display a special tea set in my City Hall office to honor the time I spent living there.

San Jose also has a special connection to Japan. We are home to one of the last three major Japantowns in all of California. Located north of downtown San Jose, you can do a walking tour to learn more about its history. Today, you can still enjoy fresh made tofu at the San Jose Tofu Company, gain insight at the Japanese American History Museum, and be entertained by the amazing taiko art form from San Jose Taiko.

Here are ways to help the victims of the Japan earthquake and tsunami.

- Red Cross: [America.redcross.org](http://America.redcross.org) or by texting REDCROSS to 90999
- Salvation Army: [www.networkforgood.com](http://www.networkforgood.com)
- Google has launched its crisis response website with resources to find loved ones in Japan. You can visit the Google website for more information.

If you lived here for the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, you remember what it was like to live through the initial earthquake and then the aftershocks. You may also remember the following days of confusion, the shortage of accurate and timely information, and the need to have an emergency plan in place.

While the scientific community cannot predict when and where a major earthquake will happen, there is consensus that the San Andreas Fault will experience a major earthquake in the next decade. We've had a huge wake up call that we must be prepared for a major emergency. Here is information that will help you, your family, and your neighborhood get ready.

The basic checklist:

- two gallons of water per person for three days
- food and supplies per person for three days

flashlights and batteries

-landline phone and battery powered radio

-supply of medication and copies of important documents

-pet supplies if applicable

-know how to turn off gas, electricity, and water

Recently, Homeland Security came to speak to the City Council about emergency preparedness. They were very clear with us that residents will be on their own for at least three days. This means all first-responders will be mobilized to respond to large-scale emergencies and individuals must be ready to take care of themselves. The City of San Jose has the information you need so you are prepared to take care of yourself after an emergency.

Go to the website [www.sanjoseprepared.com](http://www.sanjoseprepared.com). At this website, you will learn more about the classes available to get you the most educated about what you can do to prepare for an emergency. There is also a document you can print out to give you the information you need for your disaster preparedness kit and details about the Emergency Volunteer Center.

Sign up for AlertSCC. It is free and easy. AlertSCC is a confidential way for anyone who lives or works in Santa Clara County to get emergency warnings sent directly to their cell phone, mobile device, email, or landline. AlertSCC can reach you wherever you are to provide information and instructions in a variety of emergency situations, which may include wildfires, evacuations, public safety incidents, and post-disaster information such as shelter locations.

The communities of Japan affected by this unthinkable disaster need to know they are not alone. I appreciate all that you are able to do to support the efforts to help the survivors. This is also the wake up call we all need to reconsider our own emergency preparedness and take action. It doesn't take much to assemble the water, supplies, and consider your loved ones before an emergency happens. I hope you will join me in making sure we are ready to help ourselves.

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